

REMARKS

As a preliminary matter, it is noted that the Examiner has not provided Applicants an initialed copy of the Information Disclosure Statement filed on September 28, 2001 nor the Information Disclosure Statement filed on October 21, 2003. Attached hereto are copies of the referenced IDS's with stamped-post cards showing receipt by the USPTO. It is respectfully requested that the Examiner provide initialed copies of the referenced IDS's indicating that each reference cited in each IDS has been considered and made formally of record.

The indication of allowable subject matter in claims 4-6 is acknowledged and appreciated. Accordingly, solely in order to expedite prosecution, claims 1-3 and non-elected claims 7-16 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. New independent claim 17 (and its dependent claims) is submitted to be allowable for at least reasons generally similar to those rendering claim 4 allowable.


CONCLUSION

Having fully responded to all matters raised in the Office Action, Applicant submits that all claims are in condition for allowance, an indication for which is respectfully solicited. If there are any outstanding issues that might be resolved by an interview or an Examiner's amendment, the Examiner is requested to call Applicant's attorney at the telephone number shown below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

MCDERMOTT, WILL & EMERY



Ramyar M. Farid
Registration No. 46,692

600 13th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20005-3096
(202) 756-8000 RMF:MWE
Facsimile: (202) 756-8087
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